

## SOME RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE ETH WPF FOR IMPROVING THE RATE OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFERS FOR FACULTY POSITIONS<sup>1</sup>

**Motivation.** Efforts to promote women in the search process for new faculty are most effective if offers made to women faculty are accepted. It is likely that the acceptance rate could be improved (for men as well as for women) by systematic and gender-sensitive attention to the negotiation phase of the hiring process.

**Negotiation issues.** It is well established that the negotiation process poses a greater challenge for female than for male candidates.<sup>2</sup> This difference is reduced when women have the same access as men to information that is relevant to the negotiation. Therefore:

- Standardized information on the negotiation process should be provided to all candidates. This should include the types of resources that are open to negotiation and the type of supporting information that the candidate will be expected to provide. For example, it should be clear that personnel resources need to be specified in terms of costs rather than the number and type of positions.
- Information on start-up packages in the candidate's Department should be provided, including both a representative example and the range for recent hires at the candidate's level.
- The candidate should be informed as to the practice in the his/her Department regarding future reallocation of resources included in the start-up package as well as other relevant policies, such as support for teaching, return of overhead, etc.<sup>3</sup>

**Candidate visits.** It is important that the candidate feels welcome during visits to ETH. Since the colleagues in the candidate's Department should have a strong interest in attracting the candidate, they should be actively involved in the recruiting effort. Candidates who are not familiar with Switzerland and the Swiss system may make false assumptions based on their experience in their country of residence; interaction with an ETH faculty member with experience in the candidate's country of residence (and/or origin) may be very helpful to avoid misperceptions. For female candidates, providing an opportunity for interaction with female ETH faculty could also be helpful to the candidate. Effective planning and communication are needed to achieve a professional process that will make a good impression on the candidate and any accompanying persons. Therefore:

- The lead responsibility for coordinating the visit should be clearly defined. One person (preferably from the Faculty Office) should be responsible and everyone else should know who this is. A primary contact for the lead coordinator should be defined at the Department level and in other offices and/or institutions as appropriate.
- Checklist for a standard visit. The elements of the visit program should be standardized. The standard program should be pre-checked with the candidate and the final program should be communicated to those involved with the visit. Social interactions (e.g., dinners, etc.) should be included.
- Information flow. Effective communication channels are needed. The candidate's program should be easily accessible.

**Dual career couples.** The opportunities associated with dual career couples should be recognized. Although these cases present challenges, effective handling of dual career cases can be a powerful recruitment tool. Dual career cases must be evaluated and will often need to be handled on a case-by-case basis. This should be done consistently whether the candidate being considered for the

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<sup>2</sup> *Women Don't Ask: The High Cost of Avoiding Negotiation--and Positive Strategies for Change*, L. Babcock and S. Laschever, Princeton University Press, 2003.

<sup>3</sup> Department-specific information is required because of the variety in policies across Departments.

professorial position is female or male. It is often helpful to have information about dual career cases as early as possible, yet candidates are often reluctant to disclose this information before a formal offer is made. It might be possible to take steps to signal a willingness on the part of ETH to address dual career issues (e.g., by mentioning this in announcements of faculty positions and/or communicating it to candidates when they are invited for interviews). Despite the individual requirements of dual career couples, it should be possible to design some standard procedures and practices depending on whether the accompanying partner is academic or non-academic and junior or senior. For non-academic partners, responsibility could be assigned to the Head of HR. For academic partners at the junior level, the Head of the candidate's Department could take the lead. For academic partners at the senior level, direct involvement of the ETH President is likely to be necessary. Support staff (e.g., the Dual Career Office) may be able to help with follow up, but they are not likely to be able to initiate sensitive discussions regarding potential hiring. Dual career couples should also be informed about external resources to which ETH provides access.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> E.g., the International Dual Career Network (IDCN) Zurich-Zug-Schaffhausen (<http://www.idcn.info/our-locations/zurich-switzerland.aspx>)